

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: UNHRC, SHUM
SUBJECT: 34TH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION--DRAFT U.S. STATE-
MENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS (ITEM 12)

1. FOLLOWING IS A STATEMENT WHICH MEZVINSKY PROPOSES TO
DELIVER DURING THE PUBLIC DEBATE UNDER THE ITEM RELATING
TO VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS (ITEM 12). AS OF NOW OUR
BEST ESTIMATE IS THAT STATEMENT WILL BE GIVEN P.M.
MARCH 6. DEPT SHOULD NOTE THAT WITH RESPECT TO REFERENCES
TO HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ARGENTINA IN U.S. STATEMENT,
USDEL HAS BEEN INFORMED BY FRENCH AND SWEDISH DELS THAT
THEY EXPECT TO REFER TO THE ARGENTINEAN HUMAN RIGHTS
SITUATION IN THEIR STATEMENTS. USDEL MUCH APPRECIATES
MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER AS TRANSMITTED STATE 52498.
WE INTEND TO READ IT TO HRC TOWARD CLOSE OF DEBATE ON
ITEM 12.

2. BEGIN TEXT.

TODAY THERE ARE MILLIONS OF SUFFERING PEOPLE THROUGHOUT
THE WORLD CRYING OUT FOR HELP, CRYING TO BE HEARD OUT OF
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DESPAIR. THEY ARE ASKING US TO REPRESENT THEM.

AS A RESULT OF OFFICIAL GOVERNMENTAL POLICY, PEOPLE ARE
BEING OPPRESSED, AND TORTURED. AND WE ARE BEING CALLED
UPON TO DO SOMETHING TO PROTECT HUMAN DIGNITY AGAINST
SYSTEMATIC AND MASSIVE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. I ASK
MYSELF: ISN'T IT OUR TASK TO BRING OUR INFLUENCE TO BEAR

ON GOVERNMENTS THAT VIOLATE THE VERY BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS OF
THEIR CITIZENS?

TORTURE ABUNDANTS IN THE WORLD AND TOO OFTEN WE HEAR THE
TESTIMONY OF THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED STARK PHYSICAL
PAIN--THE HORROR STORIES OF MAN'S CRUELTY TO HIS FELLOW
MAN.

THERE ARE NO WORDS THAT CAN ADEQUATELY DESCRIBE THESE
ABUSES. HOW CAN WE COMPREHEND THE PAINED ANGUISH OF A
POLITICAL PRISONER IN A MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRY WHO WRITES:
"THEY TIE YOU TO THE UPPER BED ON YOUR BACK, AND WITH THE
HEAT COMING FROM A TORCH OR SMALL HEATER THEY BURN YOUR
BACK...SOMETIMES THE BURNING IS EXTENDED TO THE SPINE,
AS A RESULT OF WHICH PARALYSIS IS CERTAIN"?

IN AT LEAST ONE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRY THEY TAKE PRISONERS
AND HANG THEM UPSIDE DOWN BY A ROPE TIED TO THEIR FEET
AND THEN SUBMERGE THEM IN VATS CONTAINING WATER, BLOOD,
VOMIT, AND HUMAN EXCREMENT.

WE ARE SMUGLY DECEIVING OURSELVES IF WE FEEL SATISFIED
THAT WE HAVE COMPLETED OUR TASK HERE. OUR WORK IS NOT
DONE, AND NO NATION CAN BE SO SELF-RIGHTEOUS AS TO BE INSULATED FROM
CHARGES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. WE
CANNOT ALIQUOT PRISONER CATEGORY OF STATES ALWAYS TO
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BE FREE FROM SCRUTINY.

FOR EXAMPLE, WE ARE DEEPLY TROUBLED WITH THE PERSECUTION
OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES LIKE THE BAPTISTS AND JEWS IN
THE SOVIET UNION. WHAT ABOUT THE FATE OF ONE YOUNG
30-YEAR OLD SOVIET JEW, A COMPUTER SPECIALIST AND A
MATHEMATICIAN, WHO SPOKE OUT LOUD PROMOTING THE OBSERVANCE
OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS AND CONSEQUENTLY WAS ARRESTED
AND HAS BEEN HELD WITHOUT CHARGES IN MOSCOW'S LEFORTOVO
PRISON FOR ALMOST A YEAR?

HOW DO WE ANSWER THE PRIEST WHOSE ONLY APPEAL NOW IS FOR
A BIBLE WHILE SERVING A HARSH 15-YEAR SENTENCE IN A
MORDAVIAN LABOR COLONY IN THE SOVIET UNION? HIS ALLEGED
CRIME--RELIGIOUS BELIEF.

AND HOW DO WE RESPOND TO THE DISTURBING REPORTS OF
INCREASED ANTI-SEMITISM IN OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS AND ON
SOVIET RADIO AND TELEVISION? SHOULDN'T ALL CITIZENS OF
THE USSR BE PERMITTED TO LIVE WITHIN ITS BOUNDARIES IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN
RIGHTS?

EVEN THOUGH WE SEE SOME SIGNS OF PROGRESS, JEWS APPLYING FOR EMIGRATION ARE ARRESTED AND DEPICTED AS SUBVERSIVES. IT IS OBVIOUS TO US THAT THE SOVIET UNION'S RESTRICTIVE EMIGRATION POLICY PERSISTS AND MAKES A MOCKERY OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS.

AND WHO HERE HAS NOT BEEN MOVED BY THE RECENT REPORTS OF SUFFERING IN "DEMOCRATIC" KAMPUCHEA?

THERE APPEARS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE CAMBODIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE FLAGRANTLY VIOLATED FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS. EXTENSIVE KILLINGS ARE TAKING PLACE AND SUPPORTERS OF THE PREVIOUS REGIME ARE CRUELLY TORTURED.
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IN ONE VILLAGE IT WAS REPORTED THAT OVER 200 MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN ATTEMPTED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY AND SEEK REFUGE ELSEWHERE. THEY WERE SHOT DOWN BY MACHINEGUN FIRE, LEAVING ONLY A FEW SURVIVORS TO ESCAPE ACROSS THE BORDER.

LET US RECOGNIZE THAT AN INVESTIGATION IS NEEDED IN

CAMBODIA.

NEXT, HOW ARE WE GOING TO ANSWER THE RELATIVES OF THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE MYSTERIOUSLY VANISHED AS THEY DO IN GREAT NUMBERS IN ARGENTINA?

WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO RESPOND TO A FORMER OFFICIAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, AN ARGENTINEAN WOMAN, WHOSE BROTHER AND MOTHER WERE SEIZED BY THE ARGENTINEAN AUTHORITIES IN BUENOS AIRES LAST MAY 25 AND HAVE NOT BEEN HEARD OF SINCE.

AND WHAT ABOUT A HUSBAND'S PLEA TO FIND HIS WIFE, WHO LIKE HIMSELF, WAS BRUTALLY TORTURED BY ELECTRIC SHOCK AND SCALDED WITH BOILING WATER AT THE POLICE BARRACKS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN HIS HOMETOWN IN ARGENTINA IN FEBRUARY OF LAST YEAR? FOR OVER ONE YEAR HE HASN'T HEARD ABOUT HIS WIFE.

I HAVE CITED THESE EXAMPLES BECAUSE IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT OUR MANDATE IS TO PROTECT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WHEREVER THEY ARE. WE IN THIS COMMISSION ARE AT THE CROSSROADS. EITHER WE MUST LISTEN TO THESE VOICES OF ANGUISH AND DESPAIR AND ACT OR HONESTLY ADMIT THAT HUMAN SUFFERING WILL CONTINUE TO BE IGNORED.

I BELIEVE THAT WE CAN STILL FULFILL OUR MISSION.

FIRST, WE CANNOT CONTINUE TO PICK ON JUST A FEW NATIONS AND MAKE THEM SCAPEGOATS FOR US ALL. NO REGION, NO CONTINENT IS IMMUNE. OUR EXAMINATION OF SEPARATE COUNTRY SITUATIONS CAN BE USED TO IDENTIFY THE MOST PREVALENT ABUSES. WE THEN SHOULD CONCENTRATE INITIALLY ON THE MOST HORRIFYING ABUSES, SUCH AS TORTURE, AND ON MEASURES TO ERADICATE THE ABUSES WHEREVER THEY MIGHT OCCUR. THERE ARE OTHER BASIC RIGHTS IN THE ECONOMIC AS WELL AS IN THE CIVIL AND POLITICAL FIELDS WHICH COULD STAND A SIMILAR CONCENTRATION OF OUR ATTENTION.

SECOND, WE NEED OPEN HEARINGS SO THE WORLD KNOWS WHAT WE ARE DOING. LET US PROVIDE A TIME EACH YEAR WHEN THIS COMMISSION CAN HEAR DIRECTLY FROM REPRESENTATIVE PERSONS WHOSE HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE BEEN VIOLATED, AND WHO CAN SHOW US THE DEPTH OF THE PROBLEMS WE ARE DISCUSSING HERE. SUCH MEETINGS SHOULD BE PUBLIC BECAUSE ONLY AN INFORMED WORLD OPINION IN EVERY COUNTRY WILL ENABLE US TO MEET THE TEST.

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THIRD, WE NEED TO DEVOTE THE MAXIMUM EFFORT POSSIBLE TO DISCOVER HOW EACH NATION AND REGION CAN DEVELOP ITS OWN HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS ARE ESSENTIAL. WE SHOULD STIMULATE THEIR CREATION AND GROWTH, AND WORK FROM THE GRASS ROOTS UP. INTERACTION AMONG VARIOUS VIEWPOINTS CAN ENLIST HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING GROUPS IN EVERY NATION, AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THEY ARE PART OF A WORLD MOVEMENT. WE MUST ENCOURAGE NATIONAL MONITORING GROUPS.

WE ARE REPRESENTATIVES OF OUR GOVERNMENTS, BUT IN ANOTHER SENSE WE ARE HERE AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD.

THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPONS WE HAVE FOR COMBATTING VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARE TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE. WE MUST NOT BE AFRAID TO FACE REALITY ABOUT OTHERS, TO LOOK INTO THE MIRROR WHICH REFLECTS OURSELVES.

WHAT WE MUST DO IS LET THE VOICES IN, LET THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SUFFERED SUCH MISERY AND INJUSTICE COME BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND TELL US IN THEIR OWN WORDS HOW THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE BEEN VIOLATED.

WE ARE THE ONES WHO MUST BE IN THE VANGUARD IN THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, A KEY CHALLENGE OF TODAY.

LET US HEAR REAL PEOPLE--LET US ACT IN THE REAL WORLD.
END TEXT. SORENSON

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